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INTERACTIVE CONSUMER PRODUCT PROMOTION METHOD AND MATCH GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

I. Field of The Invention

The present invention relates to an interactive product promotion method and a match game associated therewith. More particularly, the product promotion method includes accessing a database from a remote interactive electronic display via the Internet or other electronic link. A screen display of a list of product categories along with a representation of the match game is accessed and displayed on the interactive display. Selected categories are used to generate printed product promotion information at the site of the interactive display as well as being used in the match game to determine instant winners.

II. Description of The Related Art

In marketing of consumer products, particularly in the United States, it has long been common for manufacturers to offer discount coupons, either by direct mail or by inserts in newspapers and magazines. Such coupons can be used while purchasing the product to receive a direct price reduction from the retail merchant. A disadvantage of this approach is the requirement for the consumer to clip and maintain a

1 coupon file, accounting for expiration dates, differences  
2 among vendors, etc. and to be able to access the correct  
3 coupon at the point of sale. It takes a somewhat dedicated  
4 shopper to take full advantage of this type of discount  
5 coupon, thus limiting the effective advertising audience for  
6 the manufacturers. In addition, the merchant has the  
7 inconvenience and cost associated with collecting the  
8 coupons and forwarding them to the manufacturers to, in  
9 turn, recoup the discounts.

10 Another common marketing approach has been to attach  
11 refund offers directly to the product, or to display them  
12 alongside the product on a retail shelf, which refunds can  
13 be mailed in to the manufacturer, along with a proof of  
14 purchase, to get a refund or rebate on the product. Some  
15 retail merchants provide a central bulletin board where all  
16 of the rebate forms are placed, requiring interested  
17 consumers to look through all of the forms to locate the one  
18 or ones in which they are interested. In addition to this  
19 time consuming search for relevant refund offers, there are  
20 several additional disadvantages of this rebate approach.  
21 Members of "discount or rebate clubs" will often take an  
22 entire booklet of refund forms from a display for trade or  
23 sale within the club, thus totally disrupting the  
24 manufacturer's promotional scheme. The forms must be  
25 printed and distributed by the manufacturers to

1 participating retailers, which represents a significant  
2 ongoing cost. Often manufacturers can supply only the  
3 largest retailers with refund forms, which diminishes the  
4 effectiveness of promotions by virtually eliminating small  
5 merchants from the marketing effort. Consumers often do not  
6 know of the existence of the refund until he or she actually  
7 examines the product or the display in the store.  
8 Furthermore, since rebates are typically for nominal  
9 amounts, such as \$.50 to \$2.00, for example, the postage  
10 costs to mail in these forms for a rebate are often  
11 prohibitive if the consumer is asked to bear them or, if the  
12 manufacturer uses prepaid postage, the postage will  
13 dramatically increase the promotional costs. The  
14 requirement to hand print many envelopes, one for each offer  
15 and to send in a separate proof of purchase, typically a  
16 store receipt, with each offer causes additional  
17 inconvenience. Lastly, the physical distribution of coupons  
18 or rebate offers by free standing inserts, newspapers,  
19 magazines and direct mail offers uses substantial valuable  
20 resources, e.g. paper, ink, electricity, petroleum products  
21 and other chemicals. Furthermore, estimates are that fewer  
22 than 5 percent of unsolicited coupons and rebate offers are  
23 ever redeemed.

24 Yet another marketing strategy, more popular in the  
25 1950's and 1960's, was the trade stamp approach, in which

1 certain participating retail merchants gave trading stamps  
2 to customers at the point of sale. The customers then  
3 placed the stamps into books and used the books of stamps to  
4 redeem prizes selected from catalogs at stamp redemption  
5 centers. This type of promotion is more retail merchant  
6 oriented than product oriented, since stamps were typically  
7 awarded for all purchases made from the participating  
8 merchant. Thus, manufacturers did not usually use trading  
9 stamps for specific product promotion. Furthermore, the  
10 logistics of maintaining stamp booklets and the requirement  
11 to physically exchange the filled booklets at a redemption  
12 center were unduly burdensome to the ultimate consumer.

13 Meanwhile, match games of chance, such as Bingo and  
14 Keno are becoming more and more popular world wide, and  
15 particularly in the United States. Bingo parlors are  
16 proliferating, both as charity fund raisers and as legal  
17 for-profit ventures. Also, currently at least 30 state and  
18 provincial lotteries have adopted a bingo card format for  
19 their instant prize winner lottery cards. These cards are  
20 typically "Scratcher Bingo" games in which a caller's card  
21 and as many as four separate bingo squares are displayed.  
22 The player scratches off the play spaces which match numbers  
23 on the caller's card, attempting a traditional bingo match  
24 of vertical, horizontal or diagonal lines or four corners.  
25 The game cards can take a full 10 to 15 minutes to complete

1 and are popular due to the hands-on participation required.  
2 Typically a player has a chance to win multiple prizes from  
3 a single card via the multiple bingo squares. Keno,  
4 although less well known, is proliferating as well with the  
5 expansion of legal gambling facilities.

6 It is apparent that, with recent proliferation in  
7 personal computers, the availability of on-line services and  
8 the Internet, and the increasing popularity of match games,  
9 such as Bingo and Keno, a more desirable and convenient  
10 method of promoting the sale of consumer products should be  
11 developed. Such a promotion method should limit, or even  
12 eliminate, the requirement for paper coupons and should  
13 allow manufacturers an opportunity to promote specific  
14 products without altering product containers or attaching  
15 special coupons to the products or store shelves. The  
16 method should also allow consumers to personally select  
17 product categories and products within the selected  
18 categories for refund or discount information in advance of  
19 their shopping trip, and, to be effective, the method should  
20 generate consumer interest and excitement by the use of a  
21 match game format for the selected product categories.  
22 Finally, the method should save valuable natural resources  
23 by specifically targeting rebate and coupon offers only to  
24 those consumers who actively solicit such offers.  
25

## Summary of the Invention

The present invention is an interactive consumer product promotion method and match game in which a database is accessed for an information screen which is displayed on an interactive electronic terminal, such as a personal computer, interactive television, in-store kiosk, etc. The displayed information screen typically includes a listing of popular consumer product categories, such as "Detergents"; "Cereals"; "Motor Oil"; "Cookies"; "Crackers"; etc. An instruction set informs the consumer to select a predetermined number of categories for which he or she desires information on available refunds or discounts. Simultaneously displayed on the screen is a matrix of spaces representing a match game such as Bingo or Keno. In the case of Bingo, a Bingo card matrix is displayed and in each space in the displayed matrix a covering symbol is displayed, or, alternatively, a mosaic picture or message can be displayed by combining multiple spaces. A computer associated with the database randomly generates a map of product categories which are associated with respective individual spaces but which are "hidden" by the covering symbols or mosaic. After all of the product categories are selected by the consumer, the database checks each selected category to determine if it is one of the ones randomly mapped to the matrix of spaces. If the selected category is

1 one of those mapped to the matrix of spaces, that particular  
2 space is revealed as a match by displaying, for example, the  
3 product category number in the space. In the case of Keno,  
4 the screen display includes a representation resembling a  
5 conventional Keno number field. Selected product category  
6 numbers are then used as Keno numbers against a randomly  
7 generated sampling of the Keno number field.

8 In either game format, the participating consumer is  
9 directed to choose a certain number of categories, eight out  
10 of 100, for example, and each selection is compared against  
11 the Bingo matrix or the Keno field for matches. In the case  
12 of a Bingo game, if the selected categories match to make a  
13 complete line horizontally, vertically or diagonally, an "X"  
14 formed by two diagonals or all four corners are filled, the  
15 consumer wins an "instant" prize. A "free" space will  
16 typically be included as one of the spaces. The odds of  
17 winning can be decreased at any time by increasing the  
18 number of free spaces. In the case of a Keno format, if a  
19 certain number of matches are made anywhere on the number  
20 field, the player is a winner. Meanwhile, for each product  
21 category selected, the player is prompted to select one or  
22 more specific products from a category menu with product  
23 promotions, coupons, or refund offers being downloaded to  
24 the interactive electronic display for each selected  
25 product. The product promotions, coupons, or refund offers

1 can be immediately printed or stored for later use by the  
2 consumer. In addition, in the event of refund promotions, a  
3 custom personalized form can be printed which allows the  
4 consumer to submit register receipts, UPC codes or other  
5 proofs of purchase for any or all of the selected products  
6 in a single envelope in order to secure a single combined  
7 electronic funds transfer or mailed refund payment.  
8 Alternatively, the form and the proofs of purchase can be  
9 electronically scanned into the database.

#### 10 11 Objects and Advantages of the Invention

12 The principle objects and advantages of the invention  
13 include: to provide an improved consumer product promotion  
14 method including a match game; to provide such a consumer  
15 product promotion method in which a consumer accesses a  
16 promotion database via an interactive electronic display  
17 terminal; to provide such a consumer product promotion  
18 method in which a number of product categories are displayed  
19 for selection by a consumer; to provide such a consumer  
20 product promotion method and match game in which a match  
21 game is displayed along with the product categories; to  
22 provide such a consumer product promotion method and match  
23 game in which the match game can take the form of a Bingo  
24 game or a Keno game; to provide such a consumer product  
25 promotion method and match game in which individual product



1 categories are associated with corresponding spaces in the  
2 match game and product categories selected by the consumer  
3 are compared against the associated categories to detect  
4 matches; to provide such a match game in which "instant"  
5 prizes are awarded depending upon the number and/or the  
6 arrangement of matched product categories; to provide such a  
7 consumer product promotion method in which personalized  
8 discount and/or refund information is made available for  
9 storing or printing for selected products in each of the  
10 selected product categories; and to provide such a consumer  
11 product promotion method and match game which is readily  
12 implementable with existing technology, which provides for  
13 effective product promotion with minimal expense, and which  
14 results in improved efficiency for participating consumer  
15 product manufacturers and enhanced interest for consumers.

16 Other objects and advantages of this invention will  
17 become apparent from the following description taken in  
18 conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein are set  
19 forth, by way of illustration and example, certain  
20 embodiments of this invention.

21 The drawings constitute a part of this specification  
22 and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention  
23 and illustrate various objects and features thereof.  
24  
25

1                                    **Brief Description of the Drawings**

2                    Fig. 1 is a block schematic diagram of an interactive  
3 electronic system for implementing the inventive interactive  
4 consumer product promotion method and match game.

5                    Fig. 2 is a flow chart of the procedures a consumer  
6 follows in selecting product categories and playing the  
7 match game.

8                    Fig. 3 is a sample initial display screen for the  
9 inventive interactive consumer product promotion method and  
10 a Bingo match game.

11  
12                   Fig. 4 is a sample display screen for the inventive  
13 interactive consumer product promotion method and Bingo  
14 match game showing matches revealed on the Bingo game which  
15 result in an instant winner.

16                   Fig. 5 is a sample display screen for the inventive  
17 interactive consumer product promotion method and Bingo  
18 match game showing all of the product categories stored at  
19 each space in the Bingo matrix and with matched category  
20 numbers which do not yield an instant winner.

21                   Fig. 6 is a sample initial display screen for the  
22 inventive interactive consumer product promotion method and  
23 a Keno match game.

24                   Fig. 7 is a sample display screen for the inventive  
25 interactive consumer product promotion method and Keno match

1 game after all of the product category selections have been  
2 made and with the randomly generated Keno numbers  
3 highlighted to reveal an instant winner.

4 Fig. 8 is a custom personalized rebate form for  
5 downloading and printing at remote sites.

6  
7 **Detailed Description of the Invention**

8 As required, detailed embodiments of the present  
9 invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be  
10 understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely  
11 exemplary of the invention, which may be embodied in various  
12 forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional  
13 details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as  
14 limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a  
15 representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to  
16 variously employ the present invention in virtually any  
17 appropriately detailed structure.

18 Referring to Fig. 1, the numeral 1 generally refers to  
19 a centralized database for the inventive interactive  
20 consumer product promotion method and match game. The  
21 database 1 includes a CPU 2 to which are connected graphics  
22 and alphanumerics programs 3 suitable for generating an  
23 interactive screen display such as the display 4 in Fig. 3.  
24 A memory 5 stores consumer product discount and refund  
25 information by product category and selected products within

1 each category. A memory 6 stores a match game map in which  
2 spaces on a map game matrix are mapped to respective  
3 consumer product categories or category numbers. The  
4 category numbers for the match game map can be randomly or  
5 pseudo-randomly generated by the CPU 2.

6 The CPU 2 is shown connected as an Internet addressable  
7 web site location, as indicated at block 11. Access to the  
8 Internet by consumers is provided conventionally via  
9 Internet Access Providers or On-line services such as  
10 America On-Line, Compuserve, etc., all of which are  
11 generally indicated at 13, connected to the public telephone  
12 system 14. Integral with the web site 11 can be a series of  
13 "hot links" to other web sites of participating  
14 manufacturers, retailers, etc. In addition to the internet  
15 connection, information can be transmitted from the database  
16 1 to inquiring consumers or manufacturers via electronic  
17 mail. An interactive electronic display for accessing the  
18 database 1 can take the form of a personal computer 15, an  
19 in-store kiosk 16 and/or an interactive television 21, each  
20 of which has access to the public telephone system 14 via  
21 respective modems 22. The personal computer 15 has a  
22 conventional data entry keyboard 23 associated therewith as  
23 well as a monitor 24 and a printer 25. An optional speech  
24 recognition module 26 can be attached to the personal  
25 computer 15 to allow a consumer to input data via voice as

1 an alternative to or in addition to the keyboard 23. An  
2 optional scanner 27 can also be attached to the personal  
3 computer 15 for scanning in completed rebate forms and  
4 proofs of purchase, as will be explained below. The kiosk  
5 16 can include a monitor 31, a keyboard 32, and a printer  
6 33. Data entry with the interactive television 21 can be  
7 accomplished in a conventional manner via keypad, light pen,  
8 speech recognition unit, etc. (not shown).

9  
10 **I. Bingo Match Game Display Screen**

11 Fig. 3 illustrates an initial screen display 4 for  
12 display on the personal computer monitor 24, the kiosk  
13 monitor 31 or the interactive television 21. The screen  
14 display 4 includes a match game area, illustrated here as a  
15 Bingo game 41, and a consumer product category display area  
16 43, as indicated by the scroll arrows 59. The Bingo game 41  
17 is a representation of a conventional Bingo card formed by a  
18 matrix of bingo playing spaces 44. One or more of the  
19 spaces 44 can be a "FREE SPACE", as shown at 45. Fig. 3  
20 illustrates the Bingo game 41 as it is first accessed by a  
21 consumer. Each of the playing spaces 44, with the exception  
22 of the "FREE SPACE" 45, is "covered" electronically with a  
23 uniform symbol, such as the dollar sign 46. As an  
24 alternative, the Bingo game spaces 44 can initially  
25 collectively display a collage or mosaic (not shown).

1           Within the product category display area 43 are  
2       displayed a plurality of product categories 47, each of  
3       which includes a numerical reference 48 and a category title  
4       49. While 30 categories 47 are illustrated in Fig. 3, it is  
5       contemplated that up to 100 or more such categories 47 can  
6       be displayed by scrolling the display area 43. An  
7       instruction area 51 includes an instruction set 52 for  
8       selecting categories 47 and playing the Bingo game 41. A  
9       prize window 53 includes a status message 54, such as "PLAY  
10      THE GAME!" or a similar invitation. A selected category  
11     display area 55 is provided beneath the Bingo game 41 with  
12     individual windows 56 for displaying the numerals 48 (Fig.  
13     4) of the categories 47 as each category is selected. An  
14     additional information window 57 can be provided for an  
15     explanation 58 for how an instant prize can be won. Scroll  
16     arrows 59 can be displayed for scrolling the category window  
17     43.

## 19     **II. Keno Match Game Display Screen**

20           Fig. 6 illustrates an alternative initial screen  
21     display 61 for display on the personal computer monitor 24,  
22     the kiosk monitor 31 or the interactive television 21. The  
23     screen display 61 includes a match game area, illustrated  
24     here as a Keno game 62, and a consumer product category  
25     display area 43. The product category display area 43 is

1 identical to that illustrated in Figs. 3-5, with a plurality  
2 of product categories 47, each of which includes a numerical  
3 reference 48 and a category title 49. Again, while 30  
4 categories 47 are illustrated in Fig. 6, it is contemplated  
5 that up to 100 or more such categories 47 can be displayed  
6 by scrolling the display area 43 as indicated by scroll  
7 arrows 59. An instruction area 51 includes an instruction  
8 set 52 for selecting categories 47 and playing the Keno game  
9 62. The Keno game 62 is a Keno number matrix with a  
10 plurality of numbers 65, here shown as 1-80. Alternatively,  
11 100 or more numbers 65 can be displayed in the Keno game 62,  
12 with the number of Keno numbers matching the number of  
13 product categories 47. Thus, the numbers 65 correspond to  
14 the numerical references 48 of the product categories 47.  
15 As in the Bingo version, a prize window 53 includes a status  
16 message 54, such as "PLAY THE GAME!" or a similar  
17 invitation, a selected category display area 55 is provided  
18 beneath the Keno game 62 with individual windows 56 for  
19 displaying the numerals 48 of the categories 47 as each  
20 category is selected. An additional information window 57  
21 can be provided for an explanation 58 for how an instant  
22 prize can be won.  
23  
24

1        III.    Consumer Product Promotion Method

2                With reference to Fig. 2, the Product Promotion Method  
3        will be described step-by-step with reference to the Bingo  
4        Game of Figs. 3-5.    At step 71, a consumer has access to an  
5        interactive electronic display, such as the personal  
6        computer 15, the kiosk 16 or the interactive television 21.  
7        For purposes of this discussion, it is assumed that the  
8        personal computer 15 is being used.    At block 72, the  
9        consumer connects the personal computer 15 to the Internet  
10       via the Internet Service Provider 13 and selects the web  
11       site address 11 of the database 1 via the CPU 2.    At block  
12       73, in response, the CPU 2 sends the screen display 4 (or  
13       61) to the monitor 24 of the personal computer 15.    At block  
14       74, the consumer reads the instruction set 52, which, when  
15       scrolled through, can read somewhat as follows:

16  
17               PLEASE SELECT EIGHT PRODUCT CATEGORIES FOR WHICH  
18               YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE DISCOUNT AND/OR  
19               REFUND/REBATE INFORMATION.    AS EACH PRODUCT  
20               CATEGORY IS SELECTED, THE CATEGORY NUMBER WILL BE  
21               DISPLAYED UNDER THE BINGO GAME CARD ON YOUR  
22               SCREEN.    ONCE YOU HAVE SELECTED ALL EIGHT  
23               CATEGORIES, IF THE NUMBERS OF THE SELECTED  
24               CATEGORIES MATCH ANY PRODUCT CATEGORY NUMBERS  
25               STORED IN SPACES IN THE BINGO CARD, THOSE SPACES



1 WILL BE REVEALED. IF YOU MATCH FIVE SPACES IN A  
2 ROW, EITHER HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY, OR  
3 DIAGONALLY, OR IF ALL FOUR CORNERS ARE MATCHED,  
4 YOU HAVE WON A PRIZE OF \$1,000.00. IF YOU MATCH  
5 ALL EIGHT SELECTED CATEGORIES TO FORM AN "X" ALONG  
6 WITH THE FREE SPACE, YOU ARE A GRAND PRIZE WINNER  
7 OF \$10,000.00! IN ANY EVENT, AVAILABLE FOR  
8 PRINTING ON YOUR PRINTER WILL BE COUPONS AND  
9 REFUND OFFERS FOR PARTICIPATING MANUFACTURERS IN  
10 THE SELECTED PRODUCT CATEGORIES ALONG WITH AN  
11 INDIVIDUALLY PERSONALIZED PRINTED REFUND/REBATE  
12 FORM FOR SUBMITTING UPC CODES AND CASH REGISTER  
13 RECEIPTS IN ORDER TO GET CASH BACK OR OTHER  
14 REWARDS FOR EACH SELECTED PARTICIPATING  
15 MANUFACTURER'S PRODUCTS PURCHASED.

16  
17 At block 75, the consumer selects eight of the product  
18 categories 47, as shown in Fig. 4. At block 82, the CPU 2  
19 randomly generates the category numbers associated with the  
20 Bingo spaces 44 and then compares the selected category  
21 numbers 48 against those in the Bingo spaces 44 and removes  
22 the "cover" dollar sign 46 from any of the Bingo spaces 44  
23 which match selected product category numbers 48. It should  
24 be noted that, for ease of illustration only, each of the  
25 revealed Bingo spaces 44 in Figs. 4 and 5 matches a

1        respective one of the first 30 category numbers 48 as shown.  
2        In reality, 100 or more categories can be scrolled through  
3        and the categories in the Bingo spaces 44 would be randomly  
4        selected from the entire 100 categories. At block 83, the  
5        CPU 2 determines if the selected category numbers 48 yield a  
6        winning combination. For example, four of the selected  
7        categories 47 may match categories in the Bingo spaces 44 as  
8        illustrated in Fig. 4 to make a winning diagonal line. If  
9        the answer is YES, at block 85, a message 54 is flashed in  
10       the prize display area 53 on the screen display 4. The  
11       message 54 can read, for example:

12                    YOU HAVE JUST WON \$1000.00!!

13       Also, at block 85, a menu 90 (Fig. 4) is displayed in a  
14       payment window 91 to allow the consumer to select the  
15       preferred method of payment from a variety of payment  
16       methods. For example, an electronic funds transfer can be  
17       made to the consumer's bank account, a credit balance can be  
18       added to the consumer's credit card, a gift certificate or  
19       credit voucher can be generated for a participating  
20       retailer, or a check can be issued and mailed directly to  
21       the consumer. Of course, as an alternative to cash, winning  
22       combinations can be rewarded with free merchandise from  
23       participating retailers or manufacturers. At block 92,  
24       payment is made in the selected manner. Alternatively, if  
25       no winning combination is detected, at block 93, a

1 consolation message, such as the message 93 in Fig. 5 is  
2 generated as all of the Bingo spaces 44 are revealed.

3 Finally, whether or not a winning combination is  
4 achieved, at block 95, the CPU 2 prompts the consumer to  
5 select specific products from the selected categories 47 for  
6 which discount coupon and/or rebate information is desired.  
7 At block 96, the CPU 2 sends data to the personal computer  
8 15 which will allow it to print discount coupons and rebate  
9 information on the printer 25 for the selected products from  
10 the product categories 47. Also, at block 96, a rebate  
11 custom personalized rebate form similar to a form 101 in  
12 Fig. 8 can be sent to the personal computer 15 by the CPU 2  
13 for printing on the printer 25. At block 97 the coupons,  
14 rebate offers and the personalized form 101 are printed out  
15 (or stored for later printing) by the personal computer 15.

16 If Keno is the match game being used, in the method of  
17 Fig. 2, instead of the Bingo determination of block 82, at  
18 block 98, the CPU 2 randomly generates a combination of  
19 twenty numbers from the Keno numbers 1-80 and then checks to  
20 see if any of the eight numbers 48 of the selected  
21 categories 47 match the randomly generated numbers 65 in the  
22 Keno game 62 and a total number of matches is generated.  
23 Then, at block 83, again, the CPU 2 determines the prize  
24 value, if any, of the number of matches. For example, a  
25 minimum of five matches might be required for an initial

1 level prize of \$50, as shown at message 99 in Fig. 7. The  
2 prize value can then increase, again as an example only, by  
3 a factor of 10 for each additional match to a grand prize of  
4 \$50,000 if all eight selected categories match the  
5 categories in the Keno game 62. Selection of the prize  
6 payment method, printing of coupons and rebate offers and  
7 the printing of the rebate form 101 is then accomplished as  
8 indicated in blocks 85, 92, 95, 96 and 97, as described  
9 above. Although a Keno game has been described where 20  
10 numbers are randomly generated out of 80, it should be noted  
11 that fewer, or more numbers can be generated depending upon  
12 the desired odds to win.

13 As a final step in the method, as indicated at block  
14 100, the consumer submits the personalized form, along with  
15 proofs of purchase for some or all of the selected products  
16 to a fulfillment center for rebate processing. The form and  
17 the proofs of purchase can be mailed in or electronically  
18 scanned, such as by the scanner 27.

19 Instead of requiring the consumer to select products  
20 after playing the game once, as indicated at block 95, they  
21 can be given the option to play multiple games, selecting  
22 products only when all game play is finished.

23 Referring to Fig. 8, the personalized rebate form 101,  
24 for use with the methods of Figs. 1 and 2, is illustrated.  
25 The form 101 includes a strip 111 at the top thereof, in

1 which a optional bar code 112 with a consumer ID number can  
2 be printed. The bar code 112 is preferably printed in a  
3 manner similar to standard scannable bar codes. In  
4 addition, or as an alternative, block 113 is provided for  
5 pre-printing or hand printing of the consumer's name,  
6 address and telephone number.

7 On the left below the strip 111 is an area 114 for UPC  
8 code numbers, such as the number 115, from selected  
9 participating products. For the consumer's convenience, a  
10 plurality of columns 121-124 are provided immediately to the  
11 right of the UPC code number 114. The column 121 is for the  
12 printed product name and the column 122 is for the rebate  
13 value associated with the product, e.g. "\$1.00". The column  
14 123 is for the number of products required for the rebate,  
15 e.g. "2 boxes". The column 124 is an expiration date, if  
16 any, for the promotion. The address for the redemption  
17 center is printed at block 125. A block 126 is reserved for  
18 totalling up the rebate due while a block 127 is used to  
19 indicate the desired method of payment, i.e. check by mail  
20 or electronic funds transfer to one of several credit cards.  
21 Since electronic funds transfer would be much more  
22 economical for the sponsor, this option can be encouraged by  
23 the use of incentives, such as additional rebates given by  
24 the credit card companies, for example. Finally, an  
25 instruction message 128 can be provided to remind the player

1 of the necessary enclosures for a rebate to be issued. As  
2 mentioned above, as an alternative to mailing the form 101  
3 and the proofs of purchase such as cash register receipts,  
4 the consumer can use an electronic scanner such as the  
5 scanner 27 to electronically scan them in to the CPU 2.  
6 Thus, if electronic funds transfer is selected as the rebate  
7 payment method in the block 127 on the form 101, and if the  
8 form and the proofs of purchase are electronically scanned  
9 in, then the entire rebate transaction can occur  
10 electronically.

11 The inventive method is very flexible in that it can be  
12 adapted for different markets, regions, or countries.  
13 Furthermore, multiple programs can be run simultaneously for  
14 different promotions. Match games can be sponsored by  
15 different manufacturers or retailers and ads can be  
16 displayed on the display screens adjacent to the match game  
17 display. Alternatively, ads or logos can be placed over the  
18 game matrix spaces as a mosaic in lieu of the dollar signs.

19 The inventive product promotion method is adaptable to  
20 any type of product or service such as automobile rebates,  
21 cellular or long distance telephone service promotions,  
22 travel related services or cable television channel  
23 promotions.

24 Although a Bingo game 41 and a Keno game 62 have been  
25 illustrated as match games for the inventive consumer

23

1 product promotion method, other match games or games of  
2 chance can be used as well. The numbers and types of  
3 product categories 47 suggested herein, as well as the prize  
4 values and winning combinations, are for example only and  
5 are not intended to be limiting. The form 101 is  
6 illustrative only and, clearly, other arrangements of fields  
7 could be designed which are equally effective.

8 It is thus to be understood that while certain forms of  
9 the present invention have been illustrated and described  
10 herein, it is not to be limited to the specific forms or  
11 arrangement of parts described and shown.  
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